

Mississippi River Northwoods

Beginning at Lake Itasca in northwestern Minnesota, the Mississippi River is one of the longest rivers in North America, a major route for migratory waterfowl, and a significant source of drinking water for many Minnesota residents. In Minnesota, the river meanders through a diversity of different forest communities and by many growing towns and communities including Brainerd in Crow Wing County.

ACRES:

+/-2,000

OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND

AWARD:

\$11M for Land acquisition
\$40,000 for initial site development
and restoration

LONG TERM STEWARD:

Crow Wing County

NATURAL RESOURCES:

2.5+ miles Mississippi
River frontage
Fisheries
Wetlands
Forests
Wild Rice
Trout Stream
Blanding's Turtle (threatened)
Red shouldered hawk (concern)
Cuyuna-Paul Bunyan State Trail
connection

PROGRAMMATIC SIGNIFICANCE:

Hunting
Fishing
Wildlife viewing
Snowmobile & trail use
Waterfowl migration habitat
Mississippi River Shoreland
Wild rice bay
Critical habitat corridor
Spawning area
Large-scale habitat complex
Prevents forest fragmentation
Complements existing public lands
Clean water



One of the most rapidly growing areas in Minnesota, Brainerd is also a popular recreation spot for tourists and visitors from the Twin Cities, which are only two and a half hours to the southeast, and elsewhere. Recreational opportunities around the region include hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, canoeing, and camping.

As forested regions of Minnesota experience pressures from growth, efforts are underway to protect forests and open spaces from fragmentation and development in order to provide recreational, natural resource, and economic benefits to the community. FY 2013 Outdoor Heritage Funds were recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and awarded by the Legislature to protect nearly 2,000 acres through fee title purchase. This project builds on a nearly ten-year collaborative effort among the State of Minnesota, Potlatch Corporation, Crow Wing County, The Trust for Public Land, state conservation groups, and local community supporters.

Located several miles northeast of the town, the +/- 2,000-acre property serves as a significant addition to protected spaces around Brainerd. With 2.7 miles of direct frontage on the southern bank of the Mississippi River, this project links other adjacent public properties to create a 9 mile stretch of protected natural river shoreline. It also provides connectivity within an area containing 6,200 contiguous acres of protected lands, including Crow Wing County Memorial Forest, the Loerch State Wildlife Management Area, State of Minnesota School Trust Lands, and Crow Wing County tax-forfeited lands that are managed for timber.

A paper mill dam downstream has contributed to the formation of Stump Bay, a lake-like basin along the property's river front. This basin serves as critical habitat, including spawning, brooding, and rearing areas for fisheries. Sand Creek, which runs through the property for one mile, provides habitat for brook trout, brown trout, and slimy sculpins. As 60% of migrating birds in North

America use the Mississippi River Flyway, the property provides crucial riparian habitat and approximately 240 acres of wetlands for migrating and resident waterfowl. These wetlands also play a critical role in upholding the area's water quality. Blanding's turtle, a state listed threatened species, have been documented on the property, and the area also supports bald eagle and red-shouldered hawk, a state listed species of special concern.

Several sites on the property that have been noted for their cultural and archeological value are protected through this project. As windows into prehistoric and pre-Columbian settlements, these sites may qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

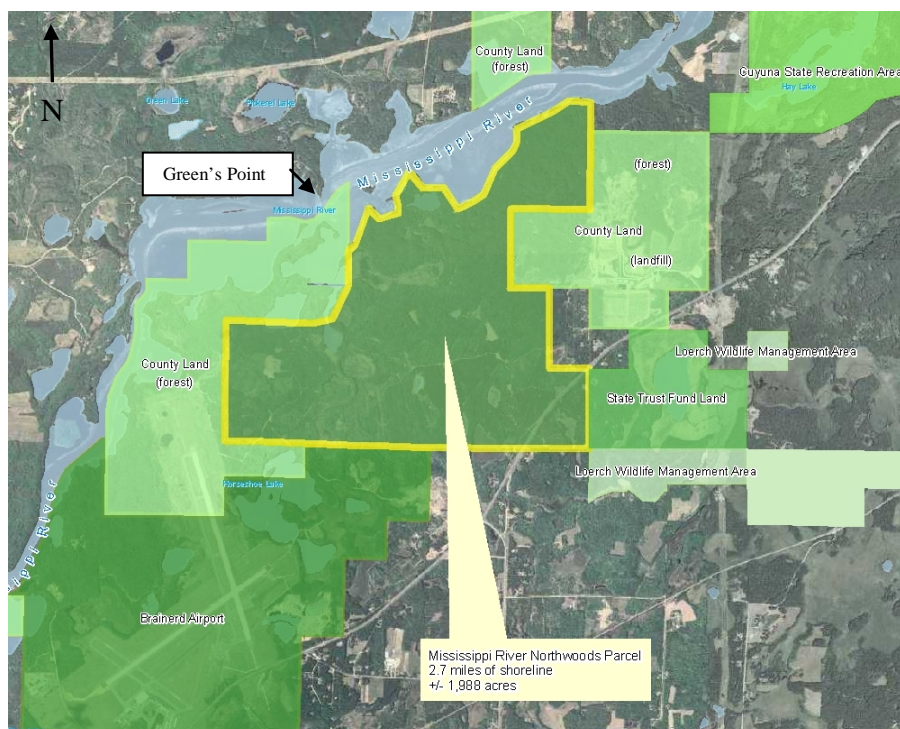
By providing public access to the property for recreation and ensuring that sustainable forestry practices are employed, the Mississippi River Northwoods project will benefit the Brainerd Lakes area economically. Visitors from Minnesota and elsewhere come to the region throughout the year to experience the outdoors. By providing an alternative to development and fragmentation of the forestlands, by protecting a popular snowmobile trail, and by ensuring that the public can hunt and hike on these lands, this project will also protect the opportunities that draw tourists and residents here to begin with. Crow Wing County's sustainable timber management on the property will help ensure the long-term availability of timber, which feeds the local economy through logging, transport, processing and product manufacturing and sale.

Lead partners: Anglers for Habitat; Crow Wing County; Cuyuna Lakes Trail Association; Delta Waterfowl (Brainerd Chapter); The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; The Nature Conservancy; The Trust for Public Land

Supporters include: Anderson Bros Construction; Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce; Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission; Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation; Brainerd Nordic Ski Club; Brainerd Snoderos; Christenson Agency; Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance; Cycle Path and Paddle; Envision Minnesota; International Mountain Bike Association; Minnesota B.A.S.S. Federation; All Chapters in Region 5 of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA), including: The Brainerd Chapter, Cuyuna Range Whitetails Chapter, Lakes and Pines Chapter (Longville), Morrison County Chapter, and Wahoo Valley Chapter (Staples); Mississippi Headwaters Board; Mississippi River Parkway Commission of MN; Muskies Inc (Brainerd Lakes Chapter); Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota; Rice Lake Association; Sportsmen for Change, and the Whitefish Resource Coalition

Area Legislative supporters, 2012 session:

Senator Paul Gazelka; Representative Larry Howes; Representative Mike LeMieur; and Representative John Ward.



Key conservation roles:

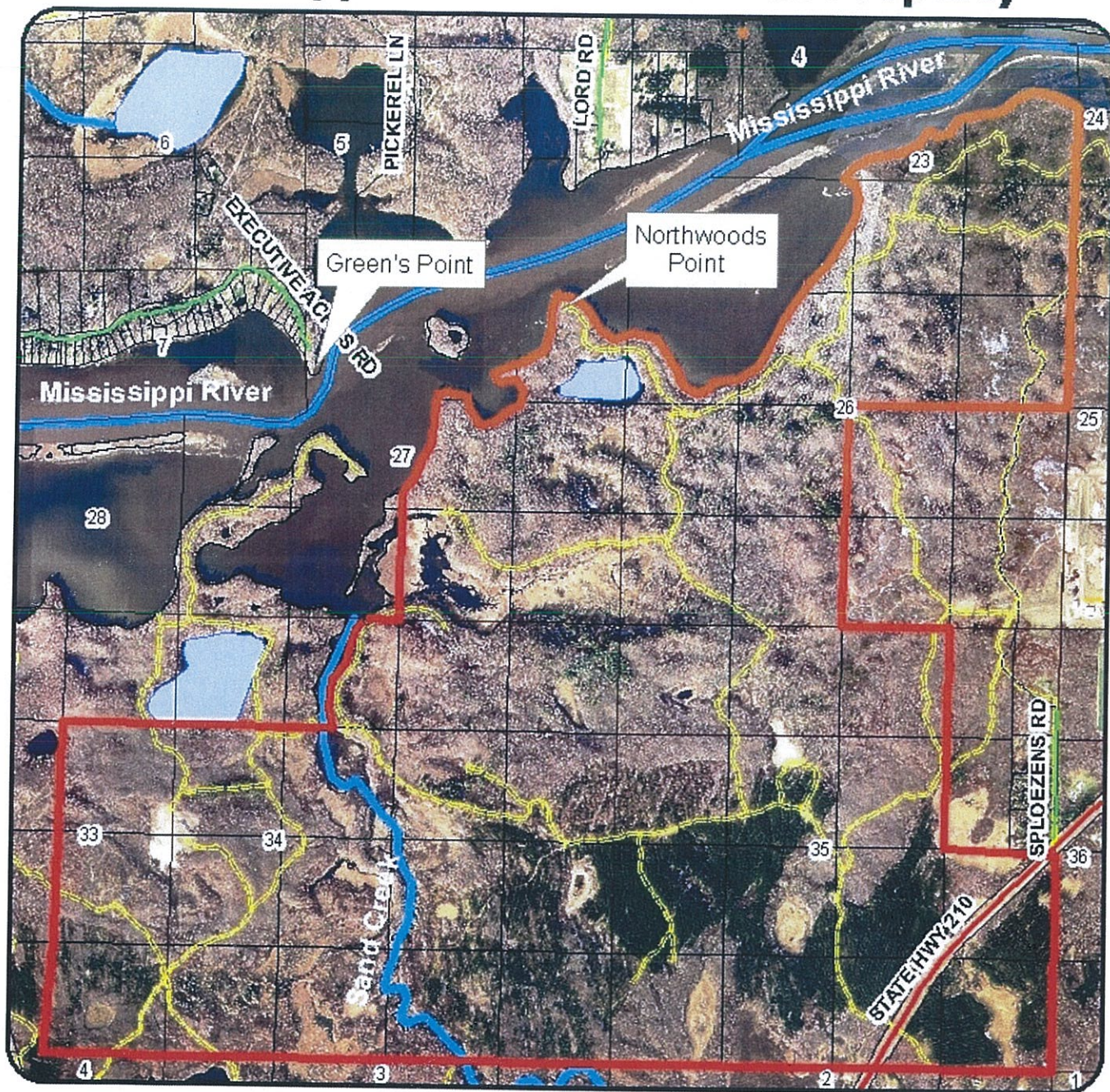
The Trust for Public Land – secured funding to purchase the property, led the conservation land transaction
The Nature Conservancy – overall funding and community support
Crow Wing County – long term property stewardship and management

Contacts:

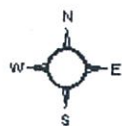
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Green's Point is approximately 10 miles northeast of Brainerd.

Mississippi River Northwoods Property



1 inch = 1,750 feet



Legend

- Mississippi River Northwoods Boundary
- Forest trails
- Streams
- Parcel data

Crow Wing County
Land Services
322 Laurel Street, Suite #12

For non-legal, reference use only

Sept. 2013

218-824-1115